

WASHINGTON, DC – Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA) and U.S. Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) introduced the Reuniting Families Act in the Senate and House of Representatives to ensure the immigration system emphasizes family reunification in its distribution of entry visas.

Four million potential immigrants are currently stuck in the entry backlog, many of whom are family members of U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents and are ready to help play vital roles in the U.S. economy. Among other provisions, the legislation would direct thousands of unused visas from previous years to close family members of U.S. citizens and legal residents, reclassify spouses and children of legal residents as immediate family and would raise the per-country cap for visas from seven percent to ten percent.

“We have an immigration system right now that penalizes families,” said Honda, chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. “Family values start with family unity and we need to put these values back into our immigration policy. This bill ensures that children and their parents, husbands and wives, get a chance to live the American dream together. This bill is right for our economy, right for our communities and right for hundreds of thousands of families.”

“We need to focus on the families. After all, family reunification is the bedrock of our immigration system it upholds American values and reinforces our economy,” said Senator Menendez. “Families are at the core of the American community. By making sure that we can reunite U.S. citizens and legal permanent resident with their parents, husbands, wives, sons or daughters, we can help promote safe and stable communities and the values that this nation was built upon. In addition, family members boost our economy with their willingness to work hard, with their propensity to pool resources to start small businesses and with their ability to help care for elderly, infirmed or infant relatives.”

The Reuniting Families Act supports the reunification of immigrant and American families by:

- Recapturing unused and unclaimed visas due to bureaucratic delay
- Reclassifying lawful permanent resident spouses and children as “immediate relatives” and exempting them from numerical caps on family immigration
- Increasing per country limits from 7% to 10% so that nations with a higher demand for workers can better equip the American economy with talent
- Allowing families to reunite despite the death of a petitioner

- Recognizing the sacrifices of our military by exempting children of World War II Filipino veterans from numerical caps; and
- Allowing family members to reunite despite bars to reentry